The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

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CHAPTER TEN

The Mighty Angel and the Little Book

Revelation 10:1-7:

- 1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:
- 2. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.
- 3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.
- 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.
- 5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,
- 6. And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:
- 7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Chapter ten begins with "I saw another Mighty Angel come down from Heaven." This is not an ordinary angel by any means. Let me point out seven things about this Angel that I feel give us his identity:

- 1. This Angel is mighty.
- 2. This Angel came down from Heaven.
- 3. This Angel is clothed with a cloud.
- 4. The face of this Angel is like the sun.
- 5. The feet of this Angel are as pillars of fire.
- 6. He has in His hand "a little book open."
- 7. He stands with one foot on the land and one on the sea-denoting universal ownership and authority. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24:1).

These seven facts testify that this Angel could be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only One found worthy to open the book and to loose the seals (Revelation 5:5-7). The book is now open and in the hand of the Mighty Angel.

In the Old Testament Jesus is referred to as "the Lord's Angel . . . the Angel of the Lord."

This specific Person - an unusual Person - appears in many places in the Old Testament. In Revelation Jesus is referred to as the Lamb, as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and also as The Warrior. Why should he not be referred to as a "Mighty Angel"?

Jesus can take any form He desires, in order to perform any specific mission having to do with completion of God's program. I believe the angels mentioned in Revelation 7:2, 8:13 and 10:1 are one and the same - the Lord Jesus Christ.

The angel John saw will actually appear when the time comes. He is referred to as "the Mighty Angel," denoting His unusual strength and setting Him apart from all other angels mentioned previously and in the chapters that follow.

Wherever clouds are connected with glorious manifestations, we find the presence of deity. In Nahum we read that the clouds are the dust of His feet. Jesus was taken up in a cloud when He ascended back to Heaven after His resurrection (Acts 1:8-10). The Lord God came down on Mt. Sinai in a thick cloud (Exodus 19:9).

the Lord appeared on the mercy seat in a cloud. When Israel was delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud" (Exodus 13:21, 14:24; Nehemiah 9:12). When the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation" (Exodus 40:34). When the Lord reproached Israel for murmuring, "the Lord appeared in a cloud" (Exodus 16:10). The Lord said unto Moses, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud" (Exodus 19:9). The psalmist said, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Psalm 97:2). "He maketh the clouds His chariots... the clouds are the dust of His feet" (Nahum 1:3). Last, but by no means least: "BEHOLD HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS and every eye shall see Him" (Revelation 1:7).

As the garments of deity, clouds indicate the unapproachableness of God and denote His infinite majesty . . . His consuming power toward sin. Sin cannot live before His uncovered glory - and yet in Revelation 10 He draws near to earth to offer mercy to earth's dwellers.

The Mighty Angel will have the rainbow - symbol of mercy - upon His head. The rainbow is a sign of divine mercy in the midst of divine judgment. This is one of the four times the rainbow is mentioned in God's Word, and on every occasion it is connected with God's mercy given unto men. God put the bow in the sky, promising to remember His covenant with the earth (Genesis 9:8-17). (The rainbow is a sign of God'S mercy - not angelic mercy.)

Angels are special creations of God, but this Mighty Angel is not one of the created beings. He is the Lord Jesus Himself. He is about to speak to earth's dwellers for the last time. The face of this Mighty Angel was like the sun.

In Revelation 1:16 John saw the countenance of Jesus "as the sun shining in his full strength." Jesus is referred to in the Bible as "the Sun of Righteousness." Paul saw a blinding light on the road to Damascus, when God parted the sky and Jesus looked down. Read the account in Acts 9. This Mighty Angel had "His feet as pillars of fire."

The same statement is made describing the feet of Jesus in Revelation 1:15: "... and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Nothing like that has been said about any ordinary angel - not even Michael or Gabriel, the archangels.

In verse 2 we learn that this Mighty Angel had in His hand a little book - open. This is the same book mentioned in chapter five, when John "**wept much**" because no one could be found worthy to open the book; but One WAS found - the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here in our present Scripture the book is open and the Mighty Angel is holding it in His hand. He stands with one foot upon the land and the other foot upon the sea.

This is significant . . . it denotes possession. When the Mighty Angel deliberately sets His feet upon the sea and upon the earth, He thereby plainly announces that He intends to possess and take them for His own. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Jesus is the rightful Sovereign of both land and sea (Revelation 5:11-13); but the devil has been the prince of the power of the air since Adam yielded to him in the Garden, and the land and the sea have been under the control of the Lord's enemies for more than six thousand years.

Thank God, Satan's control of God's creation is fast coming to a close. The whole earth now groans and travails (Romans 8:22), but one day the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters now cover the sea. Those mighty feet standing on the land and on the sea testify to the Lord's enemies that there is no need for further resistance. Who can stand against two tremendous columns of fire?

The image here is one of invincible power and steadfastness, joined with consuming destruction to those who dare oppose. Pillars are firm and mighty. Pillars of fire are irresistible. The Mighty Angel plants His feet on the sea and on the land "as pillars of fire." Never forget - Jesus deals in fire and blood. The feet of the Mighty Angel are immovable and will hurriedly consume all opposition.

"... And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth ..." This further identifies the Mighty Angel.

This is the voice of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. It is a cry of power and victory - not a cry of fear nor of distress. The lion fears no beast. He is king of the jungle, and his roar is feared by all other beasts. This cry was an announcement of vengeance upon the enemies of God and the wicked who at that time will inhabit the earth:

"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16a). Think of it! In Revelation 1:15, His voice was "as the sound of many waters." But here His voice roars like a lion. Read Jeremiah 25:29, 31.

When Jesus comes to set His feet on the earth and on the sea, He will shout the shout of victory as those "who tread out grapes." The shout shall be given and the cup of the divine fury of God shall be poured out. The winepress of the earth will be trodden under His feet until the Blood runs to the horses' bridles In the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 14:14-20).

The shout from the Mighty Angel is the announcement of the immediate oncoming judgments of God, and Heaven answers in seven thunderous voices. In connection with this, read Psalm 29.

Thunder is the voice of the Lord in judgment (I Samuel 7:10, Psalm 18:13). The seven thunders "uttered their voices." (John assumes that the readers already have Some knowledge of these seven thunders.) In Revelation 4:2, 3 John saw a throne encircled by a rainbow, and here in chapter ten we see the same rainbow. In Revelation 4 John saw upon the throne One who was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone, and "out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices."

In chapter 10, we have the same thunder, sounding out a message of God's fury and judgment.

We also had these same thunders in chapter 8, when the Priest-Angel turned the contents of His fire-filled censer upon the earth. "There were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The seven thunders are the judgment thunders from the throne of God. When the Lion of the Tribe of Judah roars, as on the eve of bounding forth upon His prey, the seven thunders utter their roaring voices as in full sympathy and agreement with what is about to proceed in righteous vengeance and holy fury from the throne of eternal majesty.

Personality is attributed to these "seven thunders." Everything is in sympathy with the Lamb of God. These mighty thunders utter messages that are intelligible . . . they speak words. John heard what they said - and when the time comes in reality, the seven thunders will speak literal words that earth's dwellers will fully understand. It will be a message in tones of thunder. We use a public address system to amplify voices when we want to be heard - but God needs no amplification. He can speak like mighty thunder - and He WILL when the time comes!

At the beginning of these marvelous visions, John was commanded to write in a book what he saw and heard - past, present and future. But when the thunders spoke, John was given another command. He was about to write - but a voice from Heaven said: "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not!"

The seven thunders must have given a terrible message. Already set before us are blood, tears, famine, heartache and heartbreak; killing, misery, hail, fire, burning mountains, demon monstrosities, men begging to die and unable to do so. Surely what John was forbidden to write must have been beyond human imagination and understanding! There is no need to speculate on what the thunders said. Your guess is as good as mine; but you may rest assured that the message had to do with God's last gigantic, unheard of, indescribable judgment, when God "lowers the boom" in utter destruction.

Will YOU be on earth when the seven thunders speak? You are the only one who can answer that question. If you are born again you will NOT be here - but if you are not born again, you may be here. Read John 1:11-12, 3:16-18, 3:36, 5:24; Romans 10:9-10, 10:13, 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9; I John 1:9. Read these verses, hear what they say; receive them - and you will not be here when the seven thunders utter their message of destruction. You will be with Jesus.

Verses 5 and 6: "And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to Heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

The Amplified New Testament reads, "And swore in the name of Him who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all they contain, and the earth and all it contains, and the sea and all that it contains. HE SWORE THAT NO MORE TIME SHOULD INTERVENE AND THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE WAITING OR DELAY."

I think this rendering makes the verse a little clearer. Time does not end here. This is not the beginning of the eternal ages. What the Angel is announcing is that there will be no further delay; God is about to lower the boom of holy fury and unheard of judgment.

Here we have the record of one of the most sublime unveilings of Revelation. How comforting, strengthening, assuring and magnificent! We turn from blood strife, chaos, demon maniacs, the devil in flesh (Antichrist) - to God's eternal purpose concerning the earth.

The earth is the Lord's - and one day the Lord Jesus will possess it and give it to His own. In the sweet by-and-by the meek shall inherit the earth. See the Mighty Angel as He stands with one foot on the sea and one on the earth - and then hear God's holy Word: "He must reign until His enemies become His footstool." Jesus will do just that!

He is the Saviour of sinners today. He will be the Judge of sinners in the tomorrow of the end of the age. The book of closing prophecy in His hand - the book that was sealed with seven seals - is now open. He lifts His hand to Heaven and swears "by Him that liveth forever and ever" (one can swear by no higher nor greater), that there will be no further delay. Judgment is about to fall. The thousand years of peace are yet ahead, and will surely come at the appointed moment.

Again I say, What a sight! The Mighty Angel (Jesus) with all the brightness of the sun, all the raging, roaring fire of a powerful furnace about His feet. The clouds of glory compose His robe and compass His body, the drapery of the blue sky floats over His mighty shoulders and around His divine head. The brilliance of the rainbow makes up His diadem. There He stands! One foot on the land, one foot on the sea! The wide extended earth and the mighty oceans serve as His footstool as His flaming feet stand to conquer and possess! With His mighty hand raised up to the stars, He speaks and vast regions of the firmament echo with His mighty voice. All the artillery of the sky bursts forth. Seven thunders speak, sending out the universal alarm, preparing the earth to receive Heaven's orders to finish God's program of judgment. There can be no further delay.

- The cup of fury is running over.
- God's longsuffering and tenderness are running out.
- Consuming fire of judgment is about to fall.

For 2,000 years God has not interfered with the governments of the world. The visible church has pushed Him out. The world is a colossal wreck. God has put up with man's insults long enough.

Man has had his chance; governments of earth have had their chance; the visible church has had its chance.

There can be no further delay.

In verse 7 we read, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets."

Let me list the seven mysteries:

- 1. The mystery of God's will (Ephesians 1:9).
- 2. The mystery of iniquity (the devil in flesh) (II Thessalonians 2: 7).
- 3. The mystery of godliness (I Timothy 3:16).
- 4. The mystery of God (Colossians 2:2).
- 5. The mystery of the seven stars (Revelation 1:20).
- 6. The mystery of the woman on the beast (Revelation 17:7).
- 7. The mystery of Israel (Romans 11:25).

These mysteries are distinct from the mystery of God in our present passage . . . they denote something previously unknown but now revealed.

The mystery mentioned in Revelation 10:7 will be unfolded at the time when the Mighty Angel, the Lord Jesus, will stand with the earth and the sea under His feet, and His hand raised toward God's throne.

Does it not seem strange that God has allowed Satan to rule the affairs of men for nearly 6,000 years? Satan has warped, twisted, marred, scarred, and almost completely wrecked creation. What havoc he has wrought!

Why has God permitted it? We know God is more powerful than the devil. We know Satan's power is subject to and limited by the power of God. Satan is mighty - but God is ALMIGHTY. The God of Heaven rules, and all power is ordained of Him. We know that Satan will soon be cast down. Why has God allowed him to get by so long?

That is God's mystery . . . God's business. It is not ours to know. He will explain it to us when we reach Home.

On one occasion a self-made free thinker asked me, "If God is so big, and the devil is so terrible, why does not God kill the devil?" I answered him thusly: "That is none of your business! Your business and my business is to "fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Read Ecclesiastes 12:13.

- Is God indifferent to sin, ungodliness and unrighteousness?
- Is God indifferent to sorrow and tears?
- Does not God see all the suffering Satan has caused these 6,000 years?

Yes, God sees it all - God knows all about it: "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). *

* Order my book entitled "God's Strange Act"

Have you ever heard someone ask, "Where did the devil come from? Why did God make the devil?" You might ask "Why?" ten thousand times - but there is no answer. God will explain it . . it belongs to the mystery of God. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Regardless of what happens to you or me, if we are born again "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

We cannot understand how all things work together for our good - but we can believe and accept it, whether we understand it or not. "God cannot lie" (Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18).

All the suffering, pain, disappointment and hell that a believer will ever know will be right here on earth in this body. Paul, whom I believe suffered as did no other man except Jesus Christ, said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Be of good cheer! The best is yet to come! (John 16:33).

God has a plan, God has a program; and you need not worry about God's program - it is on schedule: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

God knew in the beginning exactly what He would do, exactly when He would do it, exactly HOW He would do it.

That may be a mystery to you and me, but God has a right to His own mystery. You and I need not dig into the things He does not want us to know. God has put up with sin and the devil for these many thousands of years, but when God pays, He will pay in full!

In Revelation 14:15 the angel is instructed to "thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

When the harvest is ready, the Lord will reap. The reins with which God restrains Satan are unseen today: "Only He (the Holy Ghost) who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way" (II Thessalonians 2:7). If it were not for the Holy Ghost and His restraining power, the devil would take over completely in this earth. But the Holy Ghost restrains Satan and permits him to go only so far.

Thank God we have the assurance that we are more than conquerors through the Lord Jesus, and "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

In verse 7 of our present chapter, this mystery of God is about to be finished.

Jesus, God's only begotten Son, the Heir of all things, will wrest the governments of earth out of the hands of Antichrist (the devil incarnate) and take over the governments of earth Himself (Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:32,33). Just as surely as David sat on a throne, Jesus will sit on a literal throne in Jerusalem. You and I will reign with Him here on this earth during the Millennium. There can be no Millennium until the devil is put in the pit (Revelation 20:1-3).

Jesus will personally put the devil on the chain gang for one thousand years. Finally he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10) and will be tormented day and night forever, eternally. He will be tormented along with those he led astray and damned. Jesus will reign with His Bride here on earth for one thousand years, and then after the battle of Gog and Magog, Jesus will reign forever (Isaiah 9:6,7).

Evil now present will be openly put down and punished - destroyed once and forever. The whole creation now groans and travails, but will be delivered (Romans 8:22). We will not be bothered with Satan nor with ungodliness any more. The mystery of God is about to be finished. There can be no delay. Jesus is about to take over the earth.

The glad tidings were proclaimed to the prophets of old, although they did not understand. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). God's public judgment of sin and the devil is imminent. He will soon judge the one who has afflicted God's saints with evil and temptation, who has destroyed souls on every hand and who is responsible for the marring of earth's created beauty. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (not exactly when the seventh angel sounds) the mystery is at an end. Christ is about to reign. This is indeed glad tidings proclaimed to His prophets of old.

We Christians today have a blessed hope which gives us strength and courage. The grace of God that saves us also teaches us to look for "the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-15).

Believers seem to be in the minority today - and truly we are, in number.

We seem to be losing the battle - but thank God we are not. We will win. We shall reign with Him on the earth. Are you ready for His return? What if Jesus should come today? Would you be left in the kingdom of Antichrist? Or would you be taken up to meet the Lord in the air? God help you to repent this very moment if you are not born again. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

JOHN EATS THE LITTLE BOOK

Revelation 10:8-11:

- 8. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.
- 9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.
- 10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.
- 11. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

The book John saw in the hand of the Mighty Angel was the same book described in chapter 5.

There it was closed; here it is open in the hand of the One worthy to open it. John was commanded to go and take the little book out of the hand of the Mighty Angel, and he obeyed immediately. He is then commanded to EAT the little book - and again he obeys. He eats the book and in his mouth it is as sweet as honey; but the moment it reaches his innermost parts it is bitter.

There is nothing sweeter than the message of grace, redemption and peace; but there is nothing quite so bitter as the judgment message that God's messengers must deliver. To eat is to make the thing one's own, to incorporate it into one's being. When John eats the little book, it is exceedingly bitter in his innermost being. Why? The book revealed the terrible, horrible judgments of God's holy fury.

The roll of God's Word to Israel was in the mouth of Ezekiel "as honey for sweetness" (Ezekiel 3:1, 3). But that message carried him on a mission to which he "WENT IN BITTERNESS, IN THE HEAT OF HIS Spirit" (Ezekiel 3:14). It is not all sweet to be a fully consecrated believer . . . a prophet faithful! There is pain, suffering, bitterness, heartache, lamentations and woe when we see and fully realize the judgment that is to come upon unbelievers. The message of Grace is sweet and must be delivered. The message of judgment is bitter; it brings anguish and suffering but it, too, must be delivered.

- John tells us that God is love and I believe it.
- Paul tells us that God is a consuming fire and I believe that.
- The Psalmist tells us that the man is blessed who walks with God and I believe it.
- The Psalmist also tells us that God is angry with the wicked every day and I believe that.

To receive as his own - as the food of his soul - these precious title deeds of the blessed inheritance, thrilled John; he was filled with joy and unspeakable gladness. But those horrible scenes of blood, wrath and fury about to be poured out upon earth's dwellers brought bitterness to his soul.

What did the Spirit mean when John was instructed to "eat the book"?

The explanation is in John 6:53 ff: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

"THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU, THEY ARE Spirit, AND THEY ARE LIFE" (John 6:63).

Now - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Who was this? "The Word was made flesh."

Jesus wrapped God's Word up in flesh and brought it down to man. When we believe the Word of God, when we assimilate the Word and take it into our minds and hearts (and into our daily living) we are eating the very life of Jesus.

The Word of God is alive - Jesus said so: "The words I speak, they are spirit and they are life." When we read and assimilate the Word of God, we are eating His flesh and drinking His Blood. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

- A. Hear the Word of God.
- B. Believe on Him (Jesus Christ).
- C. You have everlasting life.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but Incorruptible . . . by the Word of God" (I Peter 1:23).

[&]quot;By grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

John ate up the message of the little book. It was sweet in his mouth - but bitter in his soul. Read Jeremiah 15:16, John 6:49-58, Ezekiel 2:8 and 3:1-3. Prophecy both gladdens and saddens. It announces both joy and grief. It is wonderful - and horrible. It is refreshing - and yet it is bitter.

Is it sweet to you, dear Christian, when you look all around you and see the drunks, the dopers, the gamblers and the harlots, the liars, thieves and murderers?

Is that sweet to you? You know if the Rapture should take place today they would be left behind. Is that sweet?

As a believer, you know the wages of sin is death, and that all sinners go to hell and burn forever. Is that sweet?

No, if you are a true child of God that is not sweet. It is bitter . . . extremely bitter.

May God help you and me to go after the lost as we have never gone after them before. God help us to be soul winners, to warn the wicked man in his wicked way, lest he die in his sin.

Our chapter closes with these words: "And He said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

John was to prophesy OF them, not TO them - and he does just that in the following chapters of Revelation. The last verse of chapter ten leads us immediately into new phases of God's fury and judgment . . . new scenes and circumstances.

We will see in the following chapters the appearance of new personalities not referred to thus far.

 \sim end of chapter 10 \sim

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